

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

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FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

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USDEL JEC PARIS

UNCLAS SAIGON 7290

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: MOPS MILI VS VN

SUBJECT: STATEMENT ON FPJMT

REF: SAIGON 7105

FOLLOWING IS COMPLETE TEXT OF STATEMENT ISSUED BY MISSION
SPOKESMAN TODAY (JUNE 4) AT A PRESS CONFERENCE FOLLOWING
FPJMT MEETING ATTENDED BY GVN AND US DELS ONLY.
THE DEPARTMENT MAY WISH TO DRAW ON IT FOR COMMENT ON THE
SITUATION OF THE FPJMT.

"SAIGON, JUNE 4 -- THE US MISSION SPOKESMAN ISSUED THE
FOLLOWING STATEMENT TODAY.

THE DELEGATIONS OF THE UNITED STATES AND THE REPUBLIC OF
VIETNAM TO THE FOUR PARTY JOINT MILITARY TEAM (FPJMT) MET TODAY
AT THE FPJMT'S REGULARLY SCHEDULED PLENARY SESSION.
THE DRV AND PRG DELEGATIONS WERE NOT AT THE MEETING.
WE HAVE NO INDICATION WHEN THEY PLAN TO RETURN, BUT WE
EARNESTLY HOPE IT WILL BE VERY SOON.

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THE SOLE FUNCTION OF THE FPJMT IS TO PROVIDE A FORUM FOR THE FOUR PARTIES TO HELP EACH OTHER GET INFORMATION ON THE MISSING IN ACTION AND TO LOCATE, CARE FOR, AND ASSIST IN THE RETURN OF THE REMAINS OF THE DEAD. THESE RESPONSIBILITIES, PROVIDED FOR IN ARTICLE 8(B) OF THE PARIS ACCORDS ARE HUMANITARIAN AND NOT POLITICAL. THE OBLIGATION TO CARRY THEM OUT IS UNCONDITIONAL AND IS IN NO WAY LINKED TO ANY OF THE OTHER PROVISIONS OF THE ACCORDS.

THE UNITED STATES AND THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM FEEL COMPELLED TO CONTINUE THEIR EFFORTS TO RESOLVE ALL CASES OF THOSE STILL MISSING IN ACTION. THEY WILL CONTINUE TO MEET AT THE REGULARLY SCHEDULED TIMES EACH WEEK TO CARRY FORWARD THAT PORTION OF THE FPJMT'S TASK WHICH CONCERNS ONLY THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM AND THE UNITED STATES, UNTIL THE OTHER SIDE RETURN TO THEIR PLACES AT THE CONFERENCE TABLE, WHICH WE STRONGLY HOPE THEY WILL SOON DO.

THE ABSENCE OF THE COMMUNIST DELEGATIONS IS THE LATEST IN A SERIES OF SIMILAR INTERRUPTIONS OF THE WORK OF THE FPJMT SINCE ITS FORMATION OVER ONE YEAR AGO. THEIR OBVIOUS INTENT HAS BEEN TO TURN THE CLEARLY HUMANITARIAN TASKS DEFINED IN ARTICLE 8(B) AND THE UNCERTAINTY OF OVER 1400 AMERICAN MIA FAMILIES TO THEIR OWN POLITICAL PURPOSES. THE UNITED STATES CAN ONLY REGARD SUCH CYNICISM WITH DEEP REGRET. THE DEAD ARE PAST THE CARES OF THE WORLD; THERE IS NO HONOR IN BARTERING WITH THEIR BONES.

THE LARGEST PORTION OF THE CRASH AND GRAVE SITES ABOUT WHICH WE HAVE INFORMATION ARE IN NORTH VIETNAM OR IN REMOTE AREAS OF SOUTH VIETNAM WHERE CONTROL IS DISPUTED BY THE VIETNAMESE PARTIES. IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ARTICLE 8(B), THE PRIMARY AIM OF THE UNITED STATES SINCE THE SIGNING OF THE PARIS ACCORDS HAS BEEN TO OBTAIN INFORMATION ON THESE SITES AND TO OBTAIN THE RETURN OF THE REMAINS OF THE AMERICANS WHO DIED IN COMMUNIST CAPTIVITY. THE NAMES OF THESE AMERICANS WERE CONTAINED IN LISTS PROVIDED US BY THE OTHER PARTIES IN PARIS AT THE TIME OF THE SIGNING OF THE ACCORDS. TO DATE, AFTER MORE THAN ONE YEAR'S EFFORT, WE HAVE RECEIVED THE REMAINS OF ONLY 23 AMERICANS FROM THE DRV. THE DRV REFUSED

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TO RETURN THE REMAINS OF A TWENTY-FOURTH AMERICAN BURIED ALONG SIDE HIS COMRADES IN HANOI BECAUSE HE ALLEGEDLY DIED BEFORE HE COULD BE CAPTURED AND BECAME THEREBY TECHNICALLY "MISSING IN ACTION" RATHER THAN "DIED IN CAPTIVITY."

SINCE THE SIGNING OF THE PARIS ACCORDS THE UNITED STATES AND THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM HAVE BEEN COOPERATING IN ATTEMPTING TO RESOLVE THE CASES OF THE MIAS OF CONCERN

ONLY TO THEM. THE AMBUSH AND MURDER OF CAPTAIN REES AND HIS COMRADES AT BINH CHANH ON DECEMBER 15, 1973 AND SUBSEQUENT STATEMENTS BY THE OTHER SIDE, MADE CLEAR THAT THIS PORTION OF THE WORK OF THE FPJMT WOULD HAVE TO BE GIVEN EVEN GREATER EMPHASIS IF WE WERE TO KEEP FAITH WITH THE FAMILIES OF OUR MISSING IN ACTION.

SINCE THAT TIME, WE HAVE UNDERTAKEN A VARIETY OF EFFORTS INVOLVING ALL CATEGORIES OF VIETNAMESE SOCIETY, OFFICIAL AND UNOFFICIAL. FROM ALL THESE ELEMENTS, INCLUDING ALSO RVNAF UNITS, GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND PRIVATE INDIVIDUALS, WE HAVE ALWAYS RECEIVED FULL AND EFFECTIVE COOPERATION. THE VIETNAMESE PEOPLE KNOW SO WELL THE ANGUISH AND HEARTBREAK ARISING FROM LACK OF KNOWLEDGE OF THE FATE OF THEIR MISSING HUSBANDS, BROTHERS AND SONS. THEY HAVE DETERMINED TO DO WHATEVER THEY POSSIBLY CAN TO HELP ALLEVIATE THE ANGUISH OF THE FAMILIES OF THEIR AMERICAN ALLIES WHO STILL CONFRONT THE SAME UNCERTAINTIES."

MARTIN

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